

The **NEW JERSEY DIVISION OF FIRE SAFETY** is the central fire service agency in the State and is responsible for the development and enforcement of the State Uniform Fire Code, public fire safety education programs and firefighter training programs. It is housed within the State's Department of Community Affairs.

For more information on fire safety, visit the Division's Web site at:

www.nj.gov/dca/dfs

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**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS**



Fire & Burn

SAFETY

for Senior Citizen



James E. McGreevey
Governor
State of
New Jersey



Susan Bass Levin
Commissioner
Department of
Community Affairs



Lawrence Petrillo
State Fire Marshal
and *Director*
Division of Fire Safety

***Greetings from
Governor McGreevey, Commissioner Levin,
and Fire Marshal Petrillo***

In 2002, more people over the age of 65 died in accidental housefires in New Jersey than any other age group. Senior citizens are especially vulnerable to fire because they are typically slower to respond to emergency situations. Consequently, seniors should do everything they can to prevent accidental fires from starting in their homes.

This brochure offers some very important fire safety information that seniors should read carefully to protect their lives and property.

With all good wishes,


James E. McGreevey
Governor


Susan Bass Levin
Commissioner


Lawrence Petrillo
State Fire Marshal

FIRST, CHECK YOUR SMOKE DETECTORS

Smoke detectors protect you day and night. They never sleep - even when you do - and most accidental fires occur while you are asleep. A smoke detector sounds an alarm when a fire is just getting started, which enables you to get out of your home and call the fire department. Additional escape time is especially important to older Americans, who are slower to react to emergencies, more quickly overcome by smoke, more easily disoriented, and more likely to fall during an emergency escape. According to the U.S. Fire Administration, a properly working smoke detector cuts your chances of dying in a home fire in half! So buy a smoke detector today if you don't already have one, and be sure to change its batteries according to the manufacturer's instructions. Don't hesitate to contact your local fire department if you need assistance with installing your new smoke detector(s).

BE CAREFUL WHEN YOU SMOKE.

A leading cause of death for the elderly in New Jersey is careless use of smoking materials. **Never smoke in bed!** It's just too easy to fall asleep, especially late at night after you've taken some



medication. If you smoke, be sure to test your smoke detectors at least once a week to make sure they continue to work properly. If you live with someone who smokes, watch them carefully to make sure they don't fall asleep with a lit cigarette in

their hand. And don't place ash trays on the bed, sofa or the arms of chairs.

It's too easy for them to get knocked over.

Place them on tables, where they're less likely to be tipped over.



BE ESPECIALLY CAREFUL WHILE WORKING AROUND THE STOVE

70% of all people who died because their clothing caught fire were over 65 years of age! The fact is that long sleeves are more likely to catch on fire than short sleeves. Long sleeves are also more likely to catch on pot handles, which can overturn pots and pans and cause scald burns.

To work safely in the kitchen, store all combustible items away from your stove; roll back long, loose sleeves, or fasten them with elastic bands while cooking; remove any towels hanging too close to the stove, and remove any curtains that could come in contact with a hot stove.

BE PREPARED FOR FIRE

Once a fire starts, it spreads VERY quickly. Since you won't have much time to get out of the house, and since there may be a lot of confusion when a fire starts, it makes sense to practice fire drills ahead of time to prepare yourself in case a real fire actually does occur. When you develop your escape plan, make sure that you figure out two ways of getting out of every room in your home in case fire prevents you from leaving by your usual means of exit. Developing and practicing a home fire escape plan could save precious seconds in a real fire emergency and mean the difference between life and death!